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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 001593

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ITALY SUPPORTS US VIEWS ON GAERC AGENDA

REF: A) STATE 87282 B) ROME 1590

CLASSIFIED BY: POLOFF JIM DONEGAN. REASON: 1.5 (B)(D)

BALKANS

[11.](#) (C) MFA DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR EU INTEGRATION LUIGI MATTIOLO TOLD POLOFF THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT BALKANS ISSUES TO TAKE UP MUCH OF THE FM'S TIME AT THE GAERC; THERE HAD BEEN A "BROAD, PRODUCTIVE" EXCHANGE AT THE GYMnich ON APRIL 16/17, SO THE GAERC CONCLUDING STATEMENT WILL LIKELY ENDORSE THOSE RECOMMENDATIONS. ON KOSOVO, BOTH MATTIOLO AND BALKANS OFFICE DIRECTOR ANDREA ORIZIO EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO STICK TO "STANDARDS BEFORE STATUS", AND TO MAKE CLEAR TO ALL PARTIES IN THE REGION THAT THE US AND EU ARE UNITED IN THAT VIEW. THAT SAID, THE RECENT RIOTING SHOULD SERVE AS A WARNING TO THE IC THAT ITS ROLE IN STABILIZING THE REGION SHOULD BE REVIEWED, WITH AN EYE TOWARDS DEFINING METHODS TO STEM VIOLENT ACTIVITIES BEFORE THEY TURN INTO DEADLY FIREFIGHTS. ITALY WILL URGE ITS EU PARTNERS TO DO JUST THAT. UNMIK'S MANDATE IS CURRENTLY UNDER STUDY, SAID ORIZIO, BUT NATO'S AND THE EU'S ROLE SHOULD ALSO BE REVIEWED.

[12.](#) (C) MATTIOLO SAID THE MINISTERS WOULD GIVE A GREEN LIGHT TO THE COMMISSION'S POSITIVE ASSESSMENT ON CROATIA'S ACCESSION STATUS. IT WILL BE DIFFICULT BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE, AVERRED MATTIOLO, FOR CROATIA TO "CATCH THE 2007 TRAIN" FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF ACCESSION. MINISTERS WILL ALSO ENDORSE AND SIGNAL APPRECIATION FOR JAPAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL STABILIZATION, PARTICULARLY IN KOSOVO, OUTLINED AT THE APRIL 5 TOKYO MEETING ON BALKANS AID. MINISTERS WILL ALSO DISCUSS A MORE ROBUST ROLE FOR RUSSIA. ORIZIO POINTED OUT THAT MOSCOW CAN PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE, ESPECIALLY IN INFLUENCING BELGRADE AUTHORITIES ON ICTY COOPERATION AND DIALOGUE WITH PRISTINA.

CHINA ARMS EMBARGO

[13.](#) (C) MFA EAST ASIA OFFICE DIRECTOR CHRISTINA RAVAGLIA TOLD POLOFF THAT SHE IS SURE THE CHINA ARMS EMBARGO WILL BE DISCUSSED DURING THE GAERC, BUT "THERE WILL BE NO DECISION TAKEN" (SEE REF B FOR ADDITIONAL ITALIAN VIEWS ON THE EMBRGO). SHE SAID THAT THERE ARE A RANGE OF OPINIONS AMONG EU STATES WITH THE TWO POLES REPRESENTED BY FRANCE AND THE UK. ITALY IS "MILDLY FAVORABLE" TO LIFTING THE EMBARGO BUT ONLY IF THE CHINESE CREATE A MORE "FAVORABLE ENVIRONMENT". SHE STRESSED THAT THIS DID NOT MEAN "STRICT CONDITIONING". SHE FEELS THAT IT WILL STILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE CONSENSUS IS REACHED AND THAT ITALY WILL WORK TOWARDS BUILDING THAT CONSENSUS WHILE KEEPING IN MIND USG CONCERNS AND "WARNINGS".

DEVELOPMENT

[14.](#) (C) ECONOFFS DELIVERED REFTTEL POINTS ON DEVELOPMENT ISSUES TO GIANNI GHISI, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. GHISI STATED THAT ITALY'S OVERALL APPROACH TO AID EMPHASIZES PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON THE DELIVERY OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES. GHISI ADDED THAT, AT LEAST ON THE POLITICAL LEVEL, ITALY NOW STRONGLY FAVORS BILATERAL ASSISTANCE AS THE FAVORED MEANS OF CHANNELING DEVELOPMENT AID, EVEN IF MANY IN THE ITALIAN BUREAUCRACY (HIMSELF INCLUDED) REMAIN ATTACHED TO MULTILATERAL APPROACHES. REFTTEL POINTS WERE ALSO DELIVERED TO CARLO MONTICELLI, G8 FINANCIAL SOUS-SHERPA AT THE FINANCE MINISTRY.

EU-RUSSIA SUMMIT

[15.](#) (C) MATTIOLO SAID THAT RUSSIAN FM LABOV HAS BEEN INVITED TO ATTEND THE GAERC TO "FIND COMMON GROUND" ON THE AGENDA FOR THE MAY 21 EU-RUSSIA SUMMIT IN MOSCOW. THIS WILL BE THE FIRST MEETING OF THE EU/RUSSIA PERMANENT PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL, WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE ON THE MARGINS OF THE GAERC APRIL 27. ACCORDING TO MATTIOLO, THE AGENDA INCLUDES: FROZEN CONFLICTS; TERRORISM; CHECHNYA CONFLICT POLITICAL SOLUTION; STRONGER COOPERATION ON THIRD PILLAR ISSUES; ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION; WTO/TRADE ISSUES.

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